

Pocahontas



Although the name 'Pocahontas' might make us think of the story told by Disney, Pocahontas herself was a real person. Born around 1595, she was the daughter of a Powhatan chief. Her real name was actually Matoaka – 'Pocahontas' was given to her as a nickname.

One day, around 100 settlers came to explore the area that Pocahontas lived in. One of these settlers was an English explorer and soldier called John Smith. He was captured by a Powhatan hunting party when he was exploring the Chickahominy River. The hunting party planned to execute him. John Smith later wrote that Pocahontas had saved his life by throwing herself over him as he was about to be executed, but nobody really knows if this story is true.

Later, Pocahontas was kidnapped by the Jamestown settlers and held captive. The people who held her captive wanted to swap her for weapons that her father had, and they also wanted him to release the English prisoners. Although Powhatan did release the prisoners and give back some of the weapons, the colonists were not happy with the amount of weapons they had returned, so they did not release Pocahontas.

While Pocahontas was being held, she converted to Christianity and changed her name to Rebecca. She married an English colonist called John Rolfe and became Rebecca Rolfe, and together, they had a son called Thomas. This marriage helped bring some peace between the settlers and the Powhatan in Jamestown.

Pocahontas died of smallpox when she was around 22 years old.